ADDRESS

AT THE

OPENING OF THE SESSION

OF

MANCHESTER NEW COLLEGE,

LONDON,

OCTOBER THE 12TH, 1863.

BY

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Principal.

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ADDRESS.

A THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY which undertakes to train young men for the ministry of the Christian Church, is placed in a peculiar and somewhat embarrassing relation to the sphere of scientific inquiry on one hand, and the sphere of practical usefulness on the other. Between these two spheres it stands; and each has an almost equal claim on its reverent regard. Could we exclude all thought of the living world around us, and work out our critical results with the same recklessness of consequences that the mathematician experiences in disentangling the complexities of mere quantity, the task of those whose duty it is to explore and communicate theological truth would be greatly simplified, and their responsibilities proportionally lightened. But we cannot do this. The condition of the society in which we live, the connection of its existing beliefs with the practical morality of the mass of human beings, its susceptibility of influences which may be made to involve, just as they are exhibited and applied, all the difference, momentous as it may be, between a great principle or a fatal mistake, the dependence of the proper effect of even the highest truth on the moral culture and preparedness of the minds to which it is addressed—these are facts which it would be madness to overlook, which cannot be eliminated from the practical problem set before us, but must be taken into account as elements essential to its satisfactory solution. On the other hand, were we to discard all science but such as a former age has accepted and ratified, our business as philanthropists and social reformers would certainly be disencumbered of not a few difficulties, and, for a time at least, might proceed more smoothly and pleasantly: and it is remarkable that the men who have produced the strongest impression on the religious condition of their times—Paul, Luther, Wesley—eschewed all science, and adopting without question the forms of theological thought which they found traditionally current in the world, availed themselves of the hold which these had already obtained on the surface of the human mind, to penetrate through them with a new spiritual power into its hidden depths. But scientific

truth cannot be for ever kept in abeyance. However for a season the spiritual and scientific elements of our nature may beneficially subsist apart, each doing a work of its own,—a time will certainly arrive, with the fuller development of our entire humanity, when they must come into collision, and when their respective claims and mutual relationship will have to be determined by the comprehensive reason of mankind. Our Puritan forefathers were saved by the broad assumptions of the old Protestantism from many critical perplexities which harass the scholars of the present generation. They took the whole Bible from beginning to end as literally the Word of God. All that they had to do was to ascertain what it said, and to acquiesce. It was a simple question of grammar and interpretation. If apparent contradictions to reason and the moral sense anywhere occurred, as such things could not for a moment be admitted in an infallible and divinely inspired record, it was taken for granted that they would be cleared up hereafter; they were thought to arise from our own imperfect knowledge and narrow comprehension; or they were thrown back with a reverent awe into the unsearchable depths of spiritual mysteries. But evasions like these—for answers they were not—no longer satisfy the anxious questionings of devout and earnest minds. The Sufficiency of Scripture in the old-fashioned sense can no longer be determined by a single process of argumentation *ab extra*, handing over to us as the result an absolutely authoritative instrument, where we have only to read the instructions and to obey. There is a previous question, scarcely touched on in the old books on the Evidences—how this instrument was itself put together, and how its letter must often be construed to carry its spirit into effect. In the face of conclusions established beyond the reach of all rational controversy, by such men as Bunsen, Jowett, Stanley, Davidson and Colenso (to mention only names familiar to an English audience), no one will now venture to assert, that because a thing is said in so many words in any part of Scripture, therefore it must be accepted as a declaration of positive fact or an utterance of absolute truth. Scripture has acquired a new aspect in the light cast on it by the rapid development of historical and philological science. It has ceased to be one book with an uniform character throughout, and taken the form of a multifarious literature, radiating hues of thought, all fundamentally religious in their tone, but as various as the media through which they are refracted, and none of them to be identified with the pure white light of truth which is behind them and shines through them. This revolution of opinion respecting the Bible is an accomplished fact. It is impossible for any well-informed mind to go back again to the scriptural position maintained by our ancestors. The knowledge of the age forbids it. Scripture must henceforth hold a different, though, as I shall hope to shew,

a not less important place in our plan of theological study; and it becomes, therefore, one of the gravest questions of the day, especially for those who fill the office of teachers in an Academy like this—how the Scriptures, which have been, still are, and will ever be, the main source of spiritual strength and comfort to our human world, are to be viewed and handled and enforced in the altered state of enlightened belief respecting them—to keep them in harmony with a progressive science, and secure to them not only an unenfeebled but a more exalted influence over the popular mind.

When a book, like the Bible, of very miscellaneous contents, contributed under the greatest diversities of social and mental condition some thousands of years ago in languages that are now extinct, has to be made a reliable vehicle to modern times of the spiritual influences which God has breathed into it,—three separate inquiries must be instituted by every theologian who understands his duty in its whole extent. He must first recover by a comparison of existing manuscripts, versions and citations, the nearest possible approach to the original text of the sacred books. This is the critical function. He must next endeavour by a simple and unforced application of the rules of grammar, the laws of idiomatic construction and the lights of contemporary history and literature, to ascertain what it was that the writer intended to say, without any reference in the first instance to its conformity with his own sense of truth or falsehood, of rationality or absurdity. All that he has now to do, is to interpret honestly the plain letter as it lies before him. This is the province of exegesis. Hitherto it has been generally assumed, that the whole business of the theologian was exhausted in these two processes, the critical and the exegetical. It was not held possible that any further question could remain, when the sense of Scripture had been once clearly made out. But when it is recollected that human language under the most favourable circumstances is a very imperfect medium of divine truth, that the same fundamental principles are capable of expression in very different intellectual forms, and that while principles themselves are unsusceptible of change, the forms in which they are clothed admit of indefinite expansion—it is obvious that there is a third inquiry, presupposing the former two, and more important than either of them to bring out the entire force and significance of the scriptural record; and that is, what great spiritual principle, what inextinguishable religious instinct, what unbaffled and ever-during aspiration towards the Infinite, underlies the utterances and animates the histories of the Bible, and struggles through them into intelligible expression—in other words, how we are to translate its language into some modern equivalent, and feel through the suggestions of our own spiritual consciousness, what the writer would have now said, had he attempted with our new

lights and more perfect terminology to say the same thing at the present day. Without the addition of this third process, biblical studies can yield no spiritual fruit, and must degenerate into a mere branch of historical and antiquarian research.—I foresee that by those to whom this view of the subject may be new, I shall be taunted with annihilating all definite criterion of scriptural truth, and opening a door to the wildest licence of subjective speculation—that I even run some chance of being supposed to favour the triple senses of Origen or the mystical correspondences of Swedenborg. I intend nothing of the kind. I hope to shew, that the view of Scripture language which I have ventured to maintain, and which I am convinced is necessary to rescue the Bible from being cast aside as a worn-out book of the past, so far from unsettling its deepest and real sense, can alone fix and define it by a principle that is unchanging and eternal; and even of the theories of the remarkable men just cited, I may observe, that however they failed of their object, and are justly chargeable with extravagance, they are a significant attestation of the utter inadequacy of the literal and historical sense of Scripture to satisfy the wants of the most spiritual order of minds.

In all the questionings of religious philosophy the difficulty has been to find something ultimate, on which the mind can rest as an indisputable reality. Without this we are in constant danger of reasoning in a circle—of taking the premiss for the conclusion, and the conclusion for the premiss. Catholics have based the authority of Scripture on the warrant of the Church. Protestants have established the legitimacy of the Church, the *jus divinum* of their ecclesiastical order and discipline, on the witness of Scripture. In one case, Scripture stood on the Church. In the other, the Church stood on Scripture. In both cases there was an assumption, but no proof. In what relation do we perceive Church and Scripture to stand towards each other now? Neither of them can claim to be primal authorities. Both are derivative and secondary. Both of them are products of one and the same Spirit. The Spirit created the Church before it created Scripture, and gradually drew out Scripture from the bosom of the Church as an expression of its deepest thought and living consciousness. Neither Scripture nor the Church would be anything more to us than mere historical phenomena, without the unbroken continuity of the work of the Spirit in the hearts of believers. This it is which makes them living members of the Church, and enables them to appropriate in all their strength, as unquestionable realities, through their own personal experience, the promises and consolations of Scripture. The Quakers were the first in modern times who put forth in its whole breadth this great doctrine of the Spirit, as transcending all Church ordinances and superior in authority to Scripture itself—in fact, the common fountain of both. It was afterwards taken up in a modified form

in this country by the Wesleys, and wielded by them, with a power which only reality could give, in the conversion of multitudes immersed till then in the depths of practical heathenism. It still remains the greatest of all the truths contained in Christianity, standing in this peculiar relation to Christ himself:—without it, we could never have appreciated the greatness and beauty of his person, and felt how divine it is, because there would have been a want of sympathy and mutual intelligence between us and Christ; on the other hand, without the historical presentation of that person, we could never have formed any adequate conception of the change which the Spirit is capable of working in our humanity, and of the perfect union in which absolute self-surrender to its influences finally issues between God and man.

Let me explain a little more fully what I mean by the Spirit and its working, and its realization in Jesus Christ. The wise and fruitful use of Scripture must depend henceforth on a right apprehension of this subject. All spiritual substance, involving consciousness, affection, will, and the sense of right and wrong, is of one nature and quality—in God and in men. But God gives; man receives. The Spirit is the link of sympathy between God and man. It is the influence which makes man conscious of the presence of a Living God; and its work consists in kindling the affections, vivifying the moral perceptions, and strengthening the resolves, which bring the human will into harmony with the divine. I do not say that the operations of the Spirit were wholly unfelt in heathenism. On the contrary, I believe it has ever touched and purified the souls of the wisest and best in all religions. Nevertheless, a multiplicity in the objects of worship—especially when these symbolized the physical forces of the universe or the carnal instincts of human nature—must have impeded and stifled its influence. Only as men caught a glimpse of the One All-perfect Being, and clothed Him with the highest moral attributes which they could conceive, were their souls placed in the right attitude for receiving directly on them and in its full force that kindling power which we call the Spirit of God. It was the possession of this view of Deity—as one, as holy, as subsisting in the closest moral relationship with man—which constituted the peculiar distinction of the Hebrew race, and has stamped its character on the whole of their history and literature. The belief in its earliest forms was crude, imperfect, even gross. But great as was the darkness which enveloped it, on one side it was always open to the light, and hence it grew through the vitality which the Spirit infused into it from above. It was sustained by the sense of constant nearness and unobstructed access to a Living God. The whole Bible is a witness to this great fact: and there is nothing like it in any other history or literature. Pindar and Sophocles are remarkable for a certain piety of sentiment among the Greeks, and in no ancient people

was the moral sense more carefully developed by its great philosophical teachers; but it is after all a sort of æsthetic piety, a certain symmetrical correspondence of human affections to the order and harmony of the actual universe—nothing which penetrates through mere phenomena to the living heart within them—nothing which carries the human soul into direct communion with a Spirit all-holy and all-righteous—nothing analogous to the contrition, the self-abasement, the trust, the aspiration, the devotion, that we meet with in the prophecy and sacred song of the Hebrews.

We find here the true point of view for estimating the value and right use of the Bible. Looked at with the cold eye of a worldly criticism, it stands before us as a simple piece of history interwrought with its contemporaneous literature—often curious, romantic and beautiful, not seldom also repulsive and terrible; but when we detect that great idea of a kingdom of God which animates it throughout, of man's direct subjection and responsibility to the invisible Lord of conscience—that dim foreboding of a final communion between God and man, towards which the yearnings and endeavours of its saints and its heroes were constantly directed, we begin to feel—once caught by the spirit in which its deeds were acted and its words spoken—that it is something more than mere history and mere literature—a revelation of God in our humanity—in the struggles of successive generations to come nearer to God as their Father, and to live in filial harmony with him. And these things have been recorded, not to shape our actions or mould the form of our faith—as though we were to think and speak and act in all things as prophets and apostles did—but, through the kindling influence which goes forth from their great examples, to bring our souls under the influence of the same Spirit,—to send us with the same concentration of ardent purpose to the one only Source of grace and truth,—to imbue us with their love, their reverence, their patience, their trust, their self-abandonment to truth and right,—to make us, under altered circumstances, with more knowledge, with ampler powers, in heart and will spiritually one with them. The lessons of Scripture come to us through the personalities of Scripture; but personalities as such can only act through the sympathy which they inspire. The part of our nature on which their vivifying influence falls, is not the understanding, but the seat of our moral sense and the affections—the soul; and the power which they exert, is not that of abstract truth, but of the Spirit which gives to truth its moral quality and application. The work of the Spirit in man's progressive approximation to God, ever working himself more free from the animal, and seizing more and more of the spiritual, which is the great fact lying at the root of the whole of the Old-Testament history and literature—reached its height and found its completion in Christ: but his

influence is of the same kind and works through the same media as that of the prophets who preceded him—the sympathy which unites all spiritual natures—which renders them mutually intelligible, and enables the higher to attract and command the lower. The Spirit wrought its perfect work in Christ. It came not in intermittent gushes, but was given to him without measure. It was the permanent inspiration of his whole being. In his own emphatic language, it made him one with God. Nor let this be deemed the unwarranted assertion of a technical theologian. It is a fact which history and the present consciousness of civilized man fully attests. When the point of view has been once reached which puts man's moral nature in the true relation towards God, it is a position which can never more be disturbed. It is as unalterable as the mutual relation of its objects. It cannot be affected by any change in the scientific ideas or outward condition of the human race. It is not a dogma of the intellect, but an attitude of the soul. There can be but one true attitude of the soul towards God, of the filial towards the Parent, of the finite towards the Infinite, Mind. There can be but one true worship, which is that of the Father in spirit and in truth. When these have been once discovered, they assert themselves by their own self-evidencing truth, and remain with the human soul as a possession for ever. No one who believes in a Living God and is conscious of a spiritual nature within himself, can doubt that the love, the humility, the reverence, the self-surrender, the present grasp of immortality which we behold in Christ, express the true relation of the human child to its Heavenly Father, and realize in that historical form the permanent religion of our race. Even Renan, the most recent and certainly not the least daring of modern expositors of the Life of Jesus, has eloquently maintained the finality of his religion, and urged the world to seek its spiritual renovation not in any new theories, but in going back to his simple faith, and drawing out of it with new conviction and nobler consistency the principles of unsuspected power and blessing which it still contains.

A deep truth is shadowed forth in the popular doctrine of the Incarnation, which meets one of the strongest cravings of the human heart. We want to feel that God is actually with us in our humanity, that we can lay hold of a present and living God. It has been urged, not without plausibility, against the deistical theory of the universe, and even against some of the earlier phases of Unitarianism,—that by representing God in too abstract a light as a simple Power of wisdom and goodness, separated by an immense and impassable barrier of second causes from all direct contact with the minds of men, and assuming—which is another postulate of the same theory—that He created the universe in time,—it involves two very desolate conclusions: first, that God, whose nature and essence is Love, must have passed a

long and weary eternity wholly without sympathy and companionship; and secondly, that God is not *in*, but *beyond*, our humanity, and that consequently man is cut off from all immediate communion with his Father in heaven. Arguments for the orthodox dogmas of the Trinity and the Incarnation have been derived from the assumed inevitableness of these repulsive consequences from the doctrine of simple Unitarianism; and a theological school of the present day, distinguished for the learning and thought of its leaders, finds in the same view a strong support of its favourite theory,—that the Word dwelt from all eternity as a Son in the bosom of the Father, the archetype of our future humanity, realized on earth in the person of Jesus Christ, and embracing as members of its mystic body every child of man that is born into the world. For this duality in the Godhead I confess myself unable to discover any ground in reason or in scripture. If there be any dualism traceable in nature, it is that grand antagonism between good and evil which the older Parsism recognized, but which was itself resolved in the later developments of the system into a higher unity. I can also understand how the mutual relationship and joint agency of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as they are set forth in the original preaching of Christianity, and especially as they are exhibited in the Gospel of John, should have given occasion in the early Church to a Sabellian conception of the Trinity. But I cannot see what there is to justify the hypothesis of two Divine Persons equally good, one a mere reflection of the other, subsisting together for the sake of intercourse from all eternity. When the polytheistic aspect of the universe, which would most naturally suggest itself to the sensuous apprehensions of uncultivated man, is once abandoned in the movement towards higher generalizations, I am unable to perceive where that movement could rationally stop till it rested in the final Unity; and the plainest utterances of the grand intuitions of both Testaments, Old and New, are in favour of the same conclusion. If ever there were a monotheistic book in the world, it is the Bible. To call simple Unitarianism, as some have called it, a theological assumption, is itself an assumption, till it can be shewn that the onward progress of human thought from the polytheism in which it apparently commenced, is at any point legitimately arrested, short of a full recognition of the absolute Unity which enfolds and consecrates all things. History helps us to an explanation of the polytheistic element which still lingers in the bosom of a traditional Christianity. We can put our finger on the very point in time and space where this hypostatizing philosophy, transforming ideas into persons, had its origin. It was a product of the decline of an older and nobler philosophy—one of those transitional forms of thought which mark the passage from an earlier to a later civilization, and which the Church arrested and made its own, and has associated

with very different tendencies of mind. It is a tendency which, left to itself, would have had a far more varied development than was permitted by the Church. It would not have been confined to a single manifestation. The Word would not then have stood alone among its results. In the freer scope opened to it by the New Platonism, it interposed many other hypostases between τὸ Ἕν and the human mind. The Gnosticism of the second century furnishes ample evidence of its natural working.

What recommends this theory of a Divine Logos to some minds, is the readier conception which it seems to furnish of a personal God, and the more intimate bond of union which it is thought to establish between God and man. But there is nothing in the simple doctrine of the Divine Unity to necessitate the offensive consequences that have been drawn from it—to make God a solitary, distant Power, or to exclude the human soul from the loving warmth of his fatherly embrace. Space and time are conditions of being which we cannot predicate of God. As it is impossible to conceive of a time when He was not, or of any limit to his omnipresence, so it is equally impossible to conceive of Him as inactive. An inert Spirit is a contradiction in terms. But if active, He must have employed that activity in realizing the thoughts of an infinite Wisdom and Love—in giving birth everywhere and unceasingly to endless forms and conditions of existence. I cannot think of Him in repose. My only idea of his being is that of beneficent activity. An universe must therefore have always co-existed with a God. The two ideas are to me inseparable. Not as though the universe existed through any inherent force of its own. It has its being in God. It is an effect eternally issuing from the essential activity of God. We make creation subsequent to the Creator, because in the order of thought the effect must come after its cause. This view of the relation of the universe to its Divine Cause relieves us from the necessity of supposing that the Infinite Spirit existed through a whole eternity in lonely, unshared grandeur and blessedness. To the Supreme Being there can be no distinction of past and present and future. They lie before Him as one vast and present conception, wrought out in a continuous evolution of corresponding phenomena, and furnishing an exhaustless source of benevolent interest and affection. The system of the universe, so far as we can trace it, is a continuous development—the orders of creatures as they successively come into existence, continually approaching nearer to God in fulness of being, in richness of faculty, in capacity of enjoyment, in intelligence, affection, will and moral feeling. Wherein then lies the philosophical necessity for an archetypal man existing from all eternity to solace the loneliness of God, when the same end is more effectually accomplished by his omnipresent grasp and anticipated fruition of the great ideal of humanity as it unfolds itself through the eternity

to come, growing more and more into the likeness of Christ, as an object of ineffable sympathy and complacent regard? God acts out his own eternal thought in the utterances, the aspirations and endeavours of those who are conscious of his presence and strive after a future of more perfect communion with Him. This is the revelation which God makes of Himself to our human world. This is the true incarnation of the Son of God—the progressive working out of that ideal of humanity which was from the beginning with the Father of man. This is the fundamental idea lying deep in the nature of man, brought out and vivified by the influence of pure religion—the sense of the right, the just and the true, and the striving after something higher and nobler than our actual state—which secures the unity of our race through all its changes of outward condition and amidst the ceaseless growth of its intellectual acquisitions, which raises it step by step out of animalism into spirituality, which links it with the everlasting God, and gives it the earnest of an immortal heritage in Him. So God comes into our world and reconciles it with Himself. Out of this deep-seated idea springs the word of prayer and trust and hope, which, sometimes obscurer, sometimes more distinct, sometimes darkened with human passion, sometimes bright with the flame of heavenly love, goes up into the listening ear of the omnipresent Father, and, however strange the accents in which it is uttered, makes itself everywhere and always understood by that spiritual sympathy which penetrates into devout hearts through all the barriers of speech and nationality and age. To comprehend and interpret this universal language of religion is the highest function of a true theologian. It is in fact to understand our humanity itself; for religion is a reflection of the noblest aspect of our humanity. God comes and dwells in our humanity when it is earnestly turned towards Him in the spirit of Christ. To be fully conscious of this presence of God, to understand our filial relation towards Him, and to give ourselves up with childlike docility to the leadings of his Spirit, is the most perfect conception that we can form on earth of a divine revelation. Every mental change implied in that solemn word, Salvation, is involved in this spiritual state, and springs out of it by a sort of organic growth—contrition, penitence, atonement, sanctification, final peace.

If these views of the religious nature of man, of its relation to God, and of the Bible which records its deepest experiences and its sublimest utterances, are just,—they suggest the two main directions which the public teaching of our churches and the preparatory studies of our colleges ought henceforth to take. First and before all things, as the indispensable foundation of everything else, an earnest cultivation of the spirit of Christ, as the highest expression of the soul in its intercourse with God, as a true incarnation of the Divine in the human; and this, not only

from Scripture, not only from the pregnant revelations of its working in the brief fragmentary notices of the Gospels and in the testimony of apostolic experience, but also, and in some respects even more, from the present facts of a living Christianity, and the secret witness of our own souls in their struggles to rise into light and come into the presence of God. Here is a side of our being which has never yet been explored as it deserves in the spirit of a philosophy which is at once reverential and free. Here is a field of the richest psychology opened before us,—to search into the roots of the religious trusts and aspirations of man; to investigate under their religious aspects the ideas of moral obligation and responsibility; to ascertain the grounds of faith and determine the conditions of spiritual insight beyond the phenomenal; and to embrace in a comprehensive survey the moral, religious and spiritual progress of mankind. Secondly, the application of this spirit of Christ to the interpretation of the religious history and literature which prepared and announced its advent, and for the clear separation, by the unfailing test which it supplies, of the divine and the human elements which are so largely commingled in them. Here also is a field out of which the rich products which it is capable of yielding, have never yet been fully reaped. Here is a fertile soil which has remained comparatively barren, in consequence of the old-fashioned husbandry to which it has been subjected. The improved implements of philology and criticism, which have produced such copious harvests in other fields, are kept away from this, as if there were something impious in their use. We know not what great and unsuspected truths may yet break forth from God's word, when once it is handled honestly. There is a history and a literature shut up in the Bible, the true worth of which has never yet been appreciated, the surpassing beauty of which has never yet been relished, because never yet has it been brought into fair and open contact with humanity; because the full warmth and glow of the mind, needful to ripen its latent seeds of truth and beauty, has never yet been allowed to fall on it—pure taste, natural sympathies, an unperverted moral sense, and an unstrained application of the critical test of the false and the true.

These larger views of religion and the Bible, if consistently carried out, must be as productive of rich practical results, as they simplify the course and widen the intellectual horizon of the student. What complaints do we hear on all sides of the inefficacy of the public services of the church! How often is the sermon referred to as an insufferable infliction, which people submit to merely as a conventional necessity! And why is this? Because nature, simplicity and freedom are too often banished from the pulpit: because the preacher is doomed to tread a weary round of platitudes and truisms, which the world may not dispute, but does not therefore believe; and on themes where

interest is intense, and thought ever active, and thousands would gladly hear a true and honest word, he must only speak what is prescribed. Why should not the teacher of religion go to the Bible, as he would go to any other ancient history and literature—simply to see it as it is, and to unfold the ideas which it contains—with that reverent feeling which the spirit of truthfulness always inspires, and that genuine humanity which cannot dwell on any record of our race without a heart of sympathy? Let the Psalms be explained and applied with that keen sense of beauty and delicate perception of high and holy sentiment, with which a scholar of taste and feeling would interpret the Odes of Pindar; let the picturesque touches and the curious traces of antique manners and belief be brought out with the same fidelity and unreservedness from the books of Samuel and Kings, as a classical commentator would use in expounding the histories of Herodotus; and hearers would soon begin to feel that there was a human element in these things with which they could not but sympathize, and because human, therefore divine. Upon an interest thus awakened, however little it might contribute to build up a doctrinal system, it would be easy to found those searching appeals to the common heart and conscience of our humanity, in which the divinest lessons of religion are constantly conveyed. Canon Stanley's Lectures on the Jewish Church furnish an admirable example of the way in which the narratives of the Bible may be invested at once with all the interest of a romantic history and all the moral influence of a sermon. I am sure that here is a means of imparting new freshness and vitality to religious teaching, which may be employed with the greatest advantage by those who have acquired the competent learning and know how to use it with a reverent freedom. What I have said of the Old Testament applies as much to the New. We must get at its religion through its history,—not through the elaboration of doctrines separated from the circumstances under which they were delivered, and which unavoidably modified the form of their enunciation,—but through fervent sympathy with the words and actions of men who were the vehicles of its living spirit and who made up its history. There is a still wider range of pulpit instruction than that which I have just indicated. It is right in the first instance to get the spirit of the Bible direct from the study of the Bible—the spirit of Christ from the history of Christ. But when we have seized that spirit and verified its authenticity, then must we apply it in the broadest way to all the interests and concerns of human life, bringing the whole world—its pleasures, its businesses, its politics—within the scope and influence of Christianity, and resolutely effacing the artificial distinction between things secular and spiritual. Everything human has in it the essential matter of religion. We must establish our title to the Christian name, we must prove the iden-

tity of our mission with that of Christ and his apostles, by shewing that the same spirit which made them what they were, is still at work among us; that it brings us, like them, into communion with the Living God; that it keeps open for us, as for them, the passage from earth to heaven;—that as, in that first age, God was in Christ reconciling an alienated world to Himself, so is He now in us, just in proportion to our fidelity and earnestness, giving us, as we are one in heart and aim with Christ, the same victory over the sin and evil of the world. Such appears to me the way in which the gospel should be now preached, to make it still a living message to the world; and the very freedom with which an honest criticism compels us to use the primitive records of the Bible, instead of impairing its authority, only extends and deepens its moral and spiritual power.

To descend, ere I conclude, from these general observations to the special business and prospects of our Institution, especially in its relations with University College and the University of London, I have great pleasure in making the following statement. In the classes of University College, Mr. John Ainsworth, lay student in his third year, gained the fourth certificate in the extra Greek class, and the fifth in the senior Latin; Mr. A. N. Blatchford, divinity student, third year, seventh certificate in senior Latin, and seventh in senior Greek; Mr. R. A. Armstrong, divinity student, third year, fourth certificate, senior Latin, and ninth, senior Greek; Mr. J. E. Carpenter, divinity student, third year, first prize in extra Greek, second prize in senior Latin, and first prize in the junior Mathematical section of Natural Philosophy; Mr. C. T. Poynting, divinity student, first year, first prize in the lower junior Mathematics; Mr. W. Wiles, divinity student, first year, fourth certificate in junior Latin. In the University of London, Mr. Poynting and Mr. Wiles both matriculated in the first class; Mr. P. H. Wicksteed passed his first B.A. examination in the second class, pass examination, but afterwards went in for honours, and obtained the third place in Latin. At the second B.A. examination, Mr. E. Odgers passed in the first class, and gained the scholarship in Classics: Mr. L. M. Aspland, also a student in Manchester New College, passed in the first class, and gained the scholarship in Logic and Moral Philosophy; Mr. Aspland further obtained the gold medal on taking his M.A. degree in the department of Mental and Moral Philosophy. This is satisfactory evidence of the industry and proficiency of our students during the past session, and may reasonably inspire us with good hope for the future. Let me urge on them to persevere in their efforts, that they may sustain the credit of their Alma Mater, and not disappoint the expectations which they have so far encouraged their friends to entertain; and above all, let me entreat those who are preparing for the ministry, to regard their literary and scientific attainments as but the preliminary imple-

ments and materials of a far nobler work—the service of divine truth and the moral elevation of mankind. May this College and its associated Institution in University Hall, now so happily united with it under the auspices of its excellent Principal, Mr. Beesly—long continue to work heartily together in one spirit and with a common aim, and send forth year after year a succession of able and accomplished men to fulfil with highminded fidelity their various duties to the church and the world!

C. Green & Son, Printers, Hackney.